LICENSES, PERMITS & CERTIFICATIONS - DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DC towing licenses, permits and insurance

What DC requires of these businesses: registration, tax, licenses and the official links to check.

Sources verified 2026-11-21 - Updated 2026-11-21

1 The rules at a glance

- DC sales tax registration and Clean Hands (repairs taxable, labor included)
- DLCP tow truck business license ($750,000 insurance)
- $25,000 bond
- License for each tow truck and storage lot
- Company details, DOT number and storage fee on trucks

Requirements at a glance

Ask how towing charges are taxed

Required in some cases - State - DC Office of Tax and Revenue

Ask the Office of Tax and Revenue how your towing and storage charges are treated.

DLCP tow truck business, tow truck and storage lot licenses

Required - State - DC Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection

Tow businesses need a DLCP tow truck business license: $750,000 liability insurance, certificate of occupancy, proof of right to use a storage lot, a police criminal history report, a $25,000 tow truck business bond and a sample service receipt. Each tow truck needs its own license with DMV registration, and storage lots need their own license with $50,000 garage keeper's insurance and a posted fee schedule. Trucks show the company name, phone, address, DOT number, storage fee and hours.

Amount: $25,000 bond

Official application: https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1619011

Name and USDOT number on trucks

Required in some cases - Federal - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Commercial motor vehicles subject to the federal rules show the carrier's name and USDOT number on both sides, readable from 50 feet in daylight (49 CFR 390.21).

Official agencies and links

49 CFR 390.21, Marking of self-propelled CMVs and intermodal equipment

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (eCFR)

https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-390/subpart-B/section-390.21

D.C. Code 47-2001, Sales tax definitions (retail sales of services)

Council of the District of Columbia

https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/47-2001

Tow Truck Business, Tow Truck and Tow Truck Storage Lot licenses

DC Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection

https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1619011

Frequently asked questions

Do DC tow companies need a license?

Yes. DLCP licenses tow businesses, each tow truck and each storage lot.

This guide is general information, not legal advice. Rules change and can depend on your city or county, so confirm with the official agencies linked below before you apply.

https://nearbycarcare.com/resources/licenses/towing-licenses-permits-insurance/district-of-columbia/